

Chimney Point State Historic Site
Artifact Reading Activity p.1 of 2

Lesson Overview: When you bring your school group to Chimney Point, the students will be looking at a variety of artifacts. From these artifacts, they will be learning about Native American and early French culture in the Lake Champlain Valley. This worksheet guides students through an artifact reading to prepare them for their visit.

VT Standards: This activity addresses the Vermont standard- 6.6 Being an Historian

Background: Artifacts are objects made or used by people. Historians use artifacts to learn about the culture of the people who made or used them. In this activity, students study an artifact to learn about the present. By carefully examining an object, they can make educated guesses about the person who owns or uses the object.

Procedure: Have each student take out a pencil. This is the “artifact.” Direct the students to examine the pencil carefully. Give them at least a minute to study the pencil. Tell them to look at the eraser, the point, any writing, any marks, and any part of the pencil that might offer information.

Next, give each student the worksheet. Ask the students to answer the questions in as much detail as possible. There are no right or wrong answers, just observations and interpretation. Students should use rulers to measure the artifacts. While students are completing the worksheet, you may want to fill in a worksheet of your own.

Once the students have finished, talk about the answers. Complete a chart on the chalkboard. The interpretation section may require the most discussion. The chart below gives some examples.

Artifact Description	Artifact Function	Interpretation
Yellow + green Ticonderoga #2 sharp teeth marks no eraser	Writing Drawing Throwing Drumming Used at school for homework + tests	Eraser used up--owner must change his/her mind a lot Short pencil--owner needs to buy a new pencil Chewed up--owner is hungry

Connections: When the students visit the Chimney Point museum, they should pay attention to what the objects reveal about the Native American and French people who lived at or near Chimney Point. Artifacts can provide some great hints about life for these people if the students take a moment to “read” the artifacts.



Learning from a Pencil



Examine your pencil. Then answer the following questions.

Description

1. What color is it?
2. What shape is it?
3. How long is it?
4. Is it sharp?
5. What writing does it have on it?
6. What pictures does it have on it?
7. What marks does it have on it?
8. What is it made of?
9. How does your pencil differ from your neighbor's pencil?

Function

10. What is it used for?
11. Who uses it?
12. When is it used?
13. Where is it used?

Interpretation

14. Who owns this pencil?
15. What does the pencil tell you about the owner?

Further Research

16. What other questions do you have about the pencil?